



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

belong to the past alone. There is no joy in the nation. That strain of melancholy which critics remark as unequalled in its poetry, pervades all else. The viola tinkles at the door of the cottage, but it summons to no gay fandango, only to the slow and monotonous *chimarita*. The idlest popular songs are sometimes set to music which is capable of the extremity of pathos. The spell reaches the phrases of the language. There is none of that magnificent indignation which flashes for centuries on the lips of stronger races, still lightning, though innocuous; but a perpetual "Paciencia" is the one word to which the people's tongue is turned. There are many mourning nations, but none whose doom is so deep as that of Portugal. She waited for her Sebastian, till her hope grew dim. Her remaining strength, if strength she had, has gone out into the young empire of Brazil; and she sits with her dark and sweet-voiced children around her, a widow, clad in life-long sables, and weeping eternal tears.

- ART. X.—1. LAMARTINE: *Cours familier de Littérature*.
2. VICTOR HUGO: *Les Contemplations; Les Châtiments*.
3. ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE: *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*.
4. COUSIN: *Madame de Chevreuse; Madame de Hautefort*.
5. MONTALEMBERT: *Lord Palmerston et Pie IX*.

It is the commonest of all things to hear said now, (both in and out of France,) that since the *coup d'état* of December, 1851, there is no liberty of intelligence in that country, that the whole system of government goes against intellectual development, that the human mind to be fruitful must be free, and that, in short, if the present state of the nation were to endure, France would, mentally, sink into a fifth-rate power, instead of being, as she has so long been, at the head of the literature of the world. Some truth there is in all this, no doubt, and, should the present *régime* endure, in its present form, (which is next to an impossibility,) the level of men's

moral natures in France would be so low, that it would certainly be difficult for them to rise to any eminence in the sphere of intellect. But this is to be feared only for the generation to come. In the case of that which now actually exists, all the good effects of tyranny are strongly visible. We must explain. If you oppress free men, — men who have been used to let their faculties expand under the guardianship of liberal institutions, — men whose fame is the result of such institutions, and whose belief in them has the enthusiasm of a religious creed, — if, we say, you oppress such men as these, you increase their force, and therefore their value, a hundred or a thousand fold; you give them for resistance a capacity they had not for co-operation; you furnish them with a lever whereby to lift the globe, and many a one who, in his own party, is merely counted among the rank and file, becomes a general, if by attacking him you oblige him to put forth all the energies God has granted him, of which he himself was perhaps ignorant till then. No! when tyranny comes upon free men in all their maturity, it never crushes them intellectually; on the contrary, it makes combatants, and often heroes, of them. But if tyranny lasts, and overshadows the cradle of a new generation, the children who grow up and as men come to a compromise with it, who at once serve it and despise it, who sacrifice to their fear or their interest what their conscience and their honor dictate, — these are debased, and from them will spring nothing admirable, because nothing honest, — nothing elevated, because nothing true.

Power and tyranny are by no means one and the same. Submission to the utmost exercise of the utmost power may be compatible with the largest possible development of self-esteem and dignity. It suffices for this, that the power be lawful. Tyranny is illegal power, the power which men deny. Submission to it is always debasing, because, in such submission, men commit a wanton abandonment of self, and whoever obeys that which he neither respects nor believes in has commenced a moral and intellectual descent which ends only with that extreme step in the process of degradation, — the confusion of all distinction between right and wrong. France has by no means arrived at this stage. Whether she

will ever reach it, or whether the government she at present submits to, without having ratified its existence in her conscience, will maintain, unmodified, those particular forms of power which make resistance a virtue in free citizens, time must determine. For the present, the ruling minds of France are drawn by the resistance they deem a duty into the fullest manifestation of their strength, and recent circumstances have called into frequent and powerful play faculties that had for years lain dormant in their possessors.

For reasons too numerous to enter into, and which are probably more or less evident to our readers' minds, the intellectual activity of the men of Louis Philippe's day (as also, we must admit, those of the period of the Restoration) was attracted towards and absorbed by politics. To help in the work of legislation was the aim of every man of any intellectual distinction; but when he had attained that aim, the means whereby he attained it were cast by, and in the minister, the deputy, the peer of France, or the ambassador, the philosopher, the historian, or the poet was completely merged, and even forgotten. It is not our present purpose to examine whether, by this system, the country was better governed, but merely to note the fact that this *was* the system then established. We will purposely (and in order to preserve our critical impartiality) avoid saying whether Politics gained; we perfectly well know that Literature lost. From 1815 to 1851 all literary men worthy the name became more or less politicians; since 1851, all politicians of any value have become *literati*. Never in the same space of time (unless we go back to the seventeenth century) have so many solid and standard books been added to the printed capital of France, and men who were supposed to be upon the decline have suddenly burst forth upon the public with a lustre that has dazzled even their most determined admirers and disciples of former days. We will not go back too far, or we should find beneath our pen so many works calling for the utmost meed of our attention and praise, that our limits would be inevitably transgressed. We will confine ourselves within the limits of the first half of the present year; and what do we discover upon its very threshold? The two poets in whom, in modern

France, the two aboriginal tendencies of all poetry (whatever its other minor characteristics) had become incarnate, — Victor Hugo and Lamartine, the two arch-priests (in France) respectively of the Formal and of the Ideal. Of these two, one only has relapsed into verse. He who has been the longest silent, Hugo, recurs as it were to his own native tongue, and chants to the accompaniment of his lyre; — he who has scarce been silent at all since he condemned himself to prose, expresses himself in prose still, that is, virtually translates himself into another tongue; but to make up for this, it is of himself he speaks.

After the dissipation of enormous resources, of more than one kind, the author of *Jocelyn* has found himself less wealthy each year than the last; and we hasten to explain what we mean by resources of “more than one kind.” It is not only money that M. de Lamartine has squandered; it is his own genius. The treasures of his purse are not more veritably lost than those of his imagination. If fame speaks truly, Lamartine has since 1846 received in hard coin more than 1,800,000 francs; yet he now tells the whole universe that the question of obtaining somewhere about a million more is one “of life and death” to him. But that which he has during the last eight or ten years been exchanging for all this gold, — his *talent*, — does it still represent the same value? Is it not as much dissipated as its remuneration? The *Méditations*, the *Harmonies*, *Jocelyn*, *Harold*, — here were the riches, — where are they now? Is the inspiration which supplied them to be found in the *History of Russia* or in that of the *Ottoman Empire*, — or even in the *Restoration* and the *Girondins*, — his two best prose works? There can be no hesitation as to the answer. However, there for the moment the question does not lie, but in the sudden return to himself of M. de Lamartine, after so many wanderings. His talent had learned, since his entrance into Parliament under Louis Philippe, to circumscribe its manifestations almost entirely to oratorical displays, or to what was little else than the written declamation of his prose works. He had been gradually becoming impersonal, which is the reverse of what is required by the poet’s nature. Of the precise merits or demerits of his various works for the

last ten years, it is not our present purpose to speak in detail. In our opinion, they one and all fail from the want of conviction of their author, who too plainly shows the reader he is himself indifferent to what he is writing about, and who is utterly unimpassioned, without atoning for that defect either by scrupulous exactness or by statesmanlike breadth of vision. One fine day this indifference all gave way, and the poet was himself again ; for he was forced by stern necessity to fall back upon himself, and talk to the public of himself, and of himself alone.

It is more than probable, that, of all the succeeding numbers of the *Cours Familier de Littérature*, none will escape oblivion save the first ; and it may also be predicted, that nothing Lamartine ever wrote will endure longer than that first number, for nothing he ever wrote was finer, more poetical, or more touching, because nothing was ever more intensely alive, more real. It lives, painfully if you will, but it lives ; and the beat of the pulse, the vibration of the heart, the strong, unmistakable evidences of individuality, meet you on every page. It is *self-inspired*. With nearly all true poets, this would be sufficient ; with Lamartine it is pre-eminently so. Five numbers of the *Cours Familier* have already appeared,—one devoted to the memory of Delphine de Girardin, and, from the author's want of conviction, and the *banalité*, as the French say, of the praises lavished to right and to left, exceedingly disapproved of by the public ; and three containing very superficial notices of the philosophy and literature of the Hindoos. From these very inferior productions we revert to the opening number. After recounting at length his childish impressions, and endeavoring to prove how — when everything else in the world had grown to appear to him an illusion — the deep and ardent love of literature, of “human thought expressed,” still lasted, he shows what *are* the misfortunes and disappointments from which he turned to the purely literary sentiment as to a cure.

“I began,” he says, “by writing poems that I speedily consigned to the flames, and then I wrote those contemplative poems in which the world perhaps saw rather the presentiments than the promises of a poet. Everything grew to be literary in my eyes ; even my own life,

which imaged itself by degrees, with all its affections, its joys, its sufferings, in my verses. All existence was but a poem, the universe by all its voices only sang or sighed one hymn ! I lived only book in hand."

Some of this is true ; not all. It is true that to Lamartine, than whom no created being was ever more essentially and exclusively a poet, the complex life of the entire creation was but "a poem," and that in his own verses was incessantly imaged his own individual life. This is true ; but it would have perhaps been more exact to say, that the author himself lived, not "book," but "pen" in hand. No man of letters has read less than Lamartine, who has always produced more than he has absorbed. Let that be as it will, however ; from the moment the immortal lover of *Elvire* begins to tell to the public the tale of himself, he rises naturally to the sublime, and at one bound attains anew to the heights whereon his genius in youth had been ever wont to dwell. He is full of fire and of conviction, and bitterly impassioned ; his inspiration casts up a lava-flood of eloquence. It is all self, none other than self, which prompts him, and he is only so intensely poetical because so intensely selfish, in the real (not the colloquial) sense of the word.

"There are things," he exclaims, "which can be spoken but once, — but they must *have been* spoken. . . . Far from me all timidity of words ! I am unfolding my soul, even to its last most hidden folds. Away with all disguise ! if Laocoön in his marble tortures were not naked in the serpent's coils, who could bear witness to his agony ? When the heart breaks, the vein bursts.

"My life, under its false outward show, is no object for others' envy. I will say more : my life is ended ; I no longer live, — I *outlive*. Of all the many men that lived in me, — the lover, the poet, the tribune, the man of action, — the literary man alone lives now, and he is far from blessed. Years do not yet weigh me down, though I begin to feel them ; but I bear the weight of my own soul more hardly than that of time. Years mock me as the ghosts do Macbeth, pointing out to me, not crowns, but a grave. Would to God that I were laid there !

"I can find in what remains of life no smile for the future or the past ; I am growing old without posterity, in a home that is empty and surrounded by the tombs of those I loved ; I take no step out of doors but I strike against one of those eternal stumbling-blocks of our

affections or our hopes. What is left to me of existence is concentrated in a few hearts and in a modest inheritance; and those very hearts are bleeding for me. And that inheritance? — I am not sure of not being dispossessed of it to-morrow, and condemned to die on the path that leads to some foreign land !

“The very hearthstone, the fender on which my father rested his feet, on which I am now resting my own, are but a loan, and may be snatched away at any hour. They may be bought and sold at a public auction, as may my mother’s bed, and the dog that fondly licks my hand when he sees my brow furrowed with anxiety as I fix my gaze upon him. Of all this, I owe to others a strict account ! Upon the faith they have in my honor and my laboriousness, they have risked their children’s all, and the fruit of their own toil. If I did not work hard for them every day, nay, if I slept out my full night’s sleep, or if disease (which God ward off !) were to lame my pen, these friends would with me drop off into hopeless distress, and would be reduced to seek their rightful earnings under my ashes. Life in my situation, and after what I have undergone, and what I am now struggling with, resembles only those theatres whence you come away the last, and where, waiting against your will whilst the crowd passes gradually forth, you are an involuntary witness of what succeeds to the played-out play ; when the house is empty and the lights extinguished ; when the lamps smoke and the stage is stripped of its decorations, and silent shadows (sad and sinister realities !) take possession of the scene but so recently brilliant with illuminations and illusions !”

We think no reader who is well acquainted with the genius of Lamartine will doubt that this passage is equal to whatever in his earliest and best days carried his name up to the loftiest eminence. The only strange thing about it all is, that the author himself seems ignorant of the excellence of what he has done. “Why should I neglect life ?” he exclaims ; “have I not watched the death of my own thoughts ? Do you think that, with a worn-out voice, I can now desire to sing ? — to sing strophes that would end in sobbing ?” He does not see that this is precisely what he is doing ; that he has recurred to poetry, and that, since the Muse first came to him as his heavenly bride, she has never been so sublimely, so unreservedly *his*, as in this last farewell embrace. “Happy they who expire in the troubles of their country, wherein they are called upon to become actors !” cries Lamartine. “Death

is their penalty, you say; yes, but it is their refuge too. And the penalty of living,—does that seem as nothing in your eyes?"

M. de Saint Marc Girardin, by no means an enthusiast, by no means a disciple of Lamartine, a man separated from the author of *Harold* by nearly every opinion and feeling, a sharp critic, and an excellent professor,—nothing more,—M. Saint Marc Girardin was so impressed by the beauty of the passages we have quoted, that, in his next lecture at the Sorbonne, he read them aloud to his pupils, saying that he could not let the occasion pass by of making them familiar with the utmost splendor of a genius whose first glory had shone when they were not yet in their cradles.

But, as we again repeat, this last effort of M. de Lamartine is more than a mere return, it is a *rebound*, towards poetry; and it is so because, *full of self*, he has felt acutely, intensely, excruciatingly, that which he had to communicate to the world. The agony of despair has roused him to the passion inseparable from truth.

Lamartine's literary efforts may be regarded as uninfluenced directly by the state of politics in France, inasmuch as he never allows an acrimonious expression against that which is to escape him, and in no way draws his inspiration from the defence or attack of any political system. Indirectly, the present intellectual condition of his own country may, however, be said to bear upon him, because, in an organization of things where it is impossible for him to act or speak or take part in the government or administration, he can only write; all other activity being denied him, he perforce has resort to the activity of the pen.

Such is not entirely the case with Victor Hugo, who has latterly derived at least a portion of his inspiration from the immediate pressure of outward circumstances upon his imagination. *Napoleon le Petit* and *Les Châtiments* were the unmistakable product of the fermentation of political hatred. The first was as weak and unwise as the last was magnificent. And now let us, once for all, express our rule of conduct *apropos* to this subject. We will purposely avoid entering into any estimate of an author's *motives*, but take

them as he exposes them, — whether his opinions be ours or not ; we will examine his works from his own point of view, which we regard as the only fair basis of criticism, and we will see whether he attains to the end he has avowedly in view, whatever that end may be, or whether he fails in its attainment.

In *Napoleon le Petit* and *Les Châtiments* the end proposed to himself by Victor Hugo is the same, namely, the degradation, the bringing to shame, of the present chief of the state in France. We have no hesitation in affirming, that in the former he so signally fails in the attainment of his aim, that nine tenths of his readers have risen from a perusal of Hugo's pamphlet with great disgust at the writer of it, and with a strong disposition to absolve Louis Napoleon from many of the sins laid to his charge. Not so with the little volume entitled *Les Châtiments* ; justly or unjustly, (and, as we said, we will not examine motives,) the castigation is inflicted. The punishment may not be deserved, but it is one which, by the terrible splendors that surround it, makes you forget that it may be excessive or misapplied. “Hugo never wrote anything half so fine in all his life as *some* parts of that volume,” exclaimed Lamartine ; “but six thousand lines of imprecation are too much,” — and so it is. You cannot read the volume through ; but if you open it by chance, the probability is that you will fall upon something finer than all you ever read before from the same writer ; for instance, the following apostrophe, just after the *coup d'état*, to the banners of the French army : —

“ O Drapeaux du passé, si beaux dans les histoires,
Drapeaux de tous nos preux, et de toutes nos gloires,
Redoutés du fuyard,
Percés, troués, criblés, sans peur et sans reproche,
Vous qui, dans vos lambeaux mêlez le sang de Hoche
Et le sang de Bayard.

“ O vieux Drapeaux ! sortez des tombes des abîmes !
Sortez en foule, ailés de vos haillons sublimes.
Drapeaux éblouissants !

Comme un sinistre essaim qui sur l'horizon monte,
 Sortez, venez, volez ! sur toute cette honte
 Accourez fremissants !

“ Délivrez nos soldats de ces bannières viles !
 Vous qui chassiez les Rois, vous qui preniez les villes
 Vous en qui l'âme croit !
 Vous qui passiez les monts, les gouffres, et les fleuves,
Drapeaux sous qui l'on meurt, chassez ces aigles neuves
Drapeaux sous qui l'on boit ! ”

Think what you will of the cause or of the man attacked, coincide with his opinions if you choose, and defend his acts, you cannot refuse your admiration to the manner of the insult ; for never did indignation inspire a more magnificent apostrophe, or the storm of anger and hate produce flashes of more withering fire. Is the indignation unjust, uncalled for ? However this may be, its results are undeniably admirable, and our merely æsthetic sense is satisfied.

And so too with twenty other pieces we could name in the same volume. So with many portions of the poem entitled *L'Expiation*, which is too long, though full of fine isolated passages. So with the dialogue of Harmodius with his own conscience, when he seeks for arguments to justify the crime of tyrannicide. This latter poem, in its stern conciseness, we take to be infinitely superior to what Schiller has produced upon the same subject, namely, the famous soliloquy of Wilhelm Tell, in the mountain pass, an hour before the death of the doomed Gessler. Strange to say, too, the chief of what is known in France as the *Ecole Romantique échevelée* is more classical in his treatment of the theme they both undertake to revive, than the usually so classical German. Schiller fills the mind of Tell, upon the verge of his terrible act, with purely human considerations, — he is busied with “ what *men* will say of him ” ; whilst the Harmodius of Hugo, after the fashion of the ancient Greeks, demands from the elements, and from all nature, the ratification of the deed that he is fatally tempted on to commit.

These sudden reversions from the internal consciousness of man to the outward consciousness, if we may so term it, of the

external world, have always been the occasions for Hugo of his most successful efforts. In France, that one line in the *Burgraves* (an irrevocably condemned tragedy), spoken by the mysterious Guanhumara, —

“Morne sérénité des nuits azurées!” —

remains engraven on men's memories, as on stone or steel, and will probably go down from generation to generation as one of the finest verses registered in the French tongue. But the completest performance of this kind is probably to be found in the apostrophe to Nature, written on the anniversary of the *coup d'état*, which we think may be not unsatisfactorily rendered into English prose: —

“O Sun! thou countenance divine! wild-flowers of the glens! caves full of sonorous sounds, perfumes latent under weeds, hoar brambles of the woods! Sacred hills, antique rocks, oaks that have worsted time! Virgin forest, limpid lake, on whose pure breast shade lies blue! chaste wave that mirrors heaven's grandeur, — Conscience of all nature! What thinkest thou of this man?”

We should hesitate before affirming that, in the two large octavo volumes just published by Victor Hugo, under the title of *Les Contemplations*, there is anything that can be compared with what the little *recueil* of *Les Châtiments* contains. Hugo's is eminently what may be styled a heavy mind, and the lever that should move it must be a strong one. We suppose this lever never to have done its full work, and the poet's mind never to have been profoundly moved, until the circumstance of his own exile, following the *coup d'état* of 1851 as a direct consequence. We are not among those who in any degree admire Hugo's character, but we should be conniving at injustice did we not with all our might endeavor to negative the idea that his action upon this conjuncture was prompted by egotistical motives. No! Hugo, though a diffuse-minded, is by no means a large-minded man, but he *is* essentially one of those in whom passion always has the upper hand of interest. He is pre-eminently capable of disinterested indignation, and to the disinterestedness of his indignation in this case he owes what marks incomparably his completest mastery over

the Muse, — what will, when contemporary passions are stilled, and contemporary wrongs forgotten, insure to the name of Hugo undying renown as a poet, and as a vindicator of Right over Force, — as one of those enthusiasts of defeat, not of victory, who are every day growing rarer in the world.

We have called Hugo “diffuse-minded,” and we can find no other term to convey our meaning. He is, to use his own words when he describes himself in a burying-ground, “listening to the harmonies of his own soul and of the dead.” He is “full of shade.”

“L’ombre m’emplissait !”

he exclaims, and we know no fitter words whereby to characterize the habitual conditions of a genius whose fire-flashes almost always serve the better to illumine the tempestuous state of the atmosphere wherein it moves. With Hugo you may be quite sure of tracing “home to its cloud the lightning of the mind”; for cloud is its element. Cloud wraps him mentally and morally around; he is, naturally, nebulous; but when the shock comes that evokes the flame, it is real fire, the positive, indisputable Olympian element, sent blazing down from the talons of Jove’s eagle.

The worst of the case is, that Hugo, who has no more critical or æsthetic sense than Lamartine, mistakes what is the accident for what he desires should be the permanent character of his talent, and he would willingly now be always thundering and lightening; the consequence whereof is, that he is very often obscure, and builds a home for his fancy in a kind of intellectual chaos.

We have spoken of the “accidents” of Hugo’s inspiration. It would be fitter to say, that the chief feature of his talent is the constant intervention of the accidental. He is sometimes sublime, but quite accidentally so; he is often simple, but this is equally the result of accident; and though sublimity is always his own preconceived pretension and aim, simplicity is by no means the permanent characteristic of his Muse. Still he is oftener simple than he is sublime, and when he is so, there is about his simplicity an exquisite grace, as, when he is pathetic, there is in his pathos a tenderness and a truth,

that may deserve for him a place close to Wordsworth himself. As an example of this, we might name a story called *The Night of the Fourth of December*, told in some twenty or thirty lines, — the plain, homely tale, in homely language, of an old grandame, who is undressing and preparing for burial the body of her grandson, seven years old, shot down by the troops in the streets, — and a piece entitled *Le Maître d'Etudes*, the simplicity and tender pathos of both which place Hugo upon a level with the greatest poet-painters the world of art has ever known.

In the first volume of *Les Contemplations* we would especially point out as charming, from their elegance and grace, from their ease and felicitous turns of expression, the lesser poems entitled *Vieille Chanson du Jeune Temps*, *La Fête chez Thérèse*, *La Nichée sous le Portail*, the song *Si vous n'avez rien à me dire*, and the beautiful and touching verses styled *An Epitaph*, which we ask leave to transcribe entire for the benefit of our readers : —

“ Il vivait, il jouait, riante créature,
Que te sert d'avoir pris cet enfant, ô Nature ?
N'as tu pas les oiseaux peints de mille couleurs,
Les astres, les grands bois, le ciel bleu, l'onde amère ?
Qu' te sert d'avoir pris cet enfant à sa mère,
Et de l'avoir caché sous des touffes de fleurs ?

“ Pour cet enfant de plus tu n'es pas plus peuplée,
Tu n'es pas plus joyeuse, ô Nature étoilée !
Et le cœur de la mère en proie à tant de soins,
Ce cœur où toute joie engendre une torture,
Cet abîme aussi grand que toi-même, ô Nature !
Est vide et désolé pour cet enfant de moins ! ”

We have no hesitation in saying, that, since the days of Petrarch, the language of no country has been enriched by a more perfect gem than this.

The second volume of *Les Contemplations* is almost entirely composed of pieces dedicated directly or indirectly to the memory of his daughter, a young bride of some six months' standing, who was drowned in the Seine with her husband, at the age of eighteen. We will not repeat what has been

said by some critics, that it was “no wonder” the poet was inspired by such a frightful disaster, for, to our apprehension, in such a case the father would naturally absorb the poet. However, it is but just to Victor Hugo to say, that he has been happily inspired by his great misfortune, and most of the poems consecrated to his daughter’s memory are not only beautiful as to form, but true as to expression, and full of simplicity and deep feeling. One only — the verses addressed to his son-in-law, Charles Vacquerie, who voluntarily let himself drown, that he might not outlive his wife — bears the marks of all the defects that Hugo can have. It is inflated in feeling, tortured in expression, and full of that absurd, monstrous, and *naïve* vanity for which no man alive is so remarkable as the author of *Ruy Blas*. The whole effusion goes to prove, that although Charles Vacquerie in the flesh had to suffer, he ought in the spirit to be consoled, seeing that his illustrious father-in-law has resolved to make him immortal, by chanting the manner of his death. “It shall not be said,” cries Hugo, with the utmost conviction, “that I let that young man pass into the other world without celebrating his virtues!”

“ En présence de tant d’amour et de vertu
Il ne sera pas dit que je me serai tu !
Moi, qu’attendent les maux sans nombre !

“ Que je n’aurai point mis sur sa bière un flambeau,
Et que je n’aurai pas, devant son noir tombeau,
Fait asseoir une strophe sombre !”

This specimen will suffice to convince the reader that we in no way exaggerate ; for these “strophes *sitting*” upon a tomb, these “torches *put upon a bier*,” all this bad poetry, and this vanity so lamentably out of place, will, we imagine, prove that Victor Hugo’s extremes of bad taste, when he is on a bad road, are quite equal to his extremes of beauty and simplicity when he is on a good one.

Contrast with what we have just quoted the following beautiful lines :—

“ Elle avait pris ce pli dans son age enfantin
De venir dans ma chambre un peu chaque matin ;

Je l'attendais ainsi qu'un rayon qu'on espère ;
 Elle entra et disait : ' Bon jour, mon petit Père ' ;
 Prenait ma plume, ouvrait mes livres, s'asseyait
 Sur mon lit, dérangeait mes papiers, et riait, —
 Puis soudain s'en allait comme un oiseau qui passe,
 Alors je reprenais, — la tête un peu moins lasse, —
 Mon œuvre interrompue, et, tout en écrivant,
 Parmi mes manuscrits je rencoutais souvent
 Quelque arabesque folle, et qu'elle avait tracée,
 Et mainte page blanche entre ses mains froissée
 Où, je ne sais comment, venaient mes plus doux vers.

.

Elle me consultait sur tout à tous moments.
 Oh ! que de soirs d'hiver radieux et charmants !
 Passés à raisonner langue, histoire et grammaire, —
 Mes quatre enfants groupés sur mes genoux, leur mère
 Tout près quelques amis causant au coin du feu !
 J'appelais cette vie être content de peu !
 Et dire *qu'elle* est morte !”

Can anything be more natural, more touching, or more true? And do we need to furnish our readers with any greater proof of the inequality of Victor Hugo's talent,—of the perpetually accidental influences which his capricious Muse obeys?

The most continuously fine expression of Hugo's poetic vein, *Les Châtiments*, is undoubtedly the product of strong political passion, as we have said; but take the whole sum of the intellectual activity of such thorough poets as Hugo and Lamartine, and you find necessarily that the smaller portion only has politics for its source. The reverse is the case with the prose-writers of contemporary France, and upon the whole extent of the lives of such men as Villemain, Cousin, Rémusat, Montalembert, Saint Marc Girardin, Tocqueville, Ayspère, and others of their literary rank, those portions of their labors will be found to be the worthiest that are due to the spirit of protestation roused in them by the condition of France since the *coup d'état* of 1851.

Tocqueville is no new name to us on this side the Atlantic, and when we reflect upon all the bad faith and all the narrow-

mind prejudice that have been expended upon European pictures of American society, (especially where the painters have belonged to our own Anglo-Saxon race,) we cannot but feel grateful to the intelligent Frenchman who at all events earnestly strove to do justice to us in every respect, and whose fame in his own country is inseparable from his efforts to give to the world a completer and truer notion of ours. Alexis de Tocqueville is essentially one of the men who have, intellectually, most profited by the embargo laid upon the political tendencies of intellect in France. He is a conscientious, therefore a slow worker, and he is a man of exceedingly delicate health. Consequently, with him any idea of simultaneous labors in Parliament and at his desk was impossible. He could, at a serious cost to his health, undertake one or the other; both were not practicable. During the period which elapsed between the publication of his work on America and the *coup d'état* of 1851, (about sixteen or seventeen years,) M. de Tocqueville was absorbed by politics. Successively a deputy of the Opposition under Louis Philippe, a conservative Republican, and Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Presidency, his whole time was devoted either to parliamentary or administrative activity, and his pen rested, unless in the framing of a report, or the discussion of an amendment. Careful almost to timidity, as he is in connection with the public, he could, during all this period of his career, find little or no time to prepare a work for the press, and accordingly his name is not to be discovered upon any publisher's catalogue from 1834 to 1856. But although he produced nothing, he during this time was amassing the materials which, when any opportunity occurred, were to form the foundations of a future contribution to the political and historical literature of France. He dragged to light and commented upon obsolete laws and administrative regulations, pried into old registers, revived forgotten customs, sought out what more impatient or more superficial writers had neglected, and accumulated what was sufficient to furnish one of the most valuable and one of the most original books that the modern French public has had to read.

The critic of critics in France, the "Descartes of criticism,"

as he has been not inaptly called, M. Villemain, speaking a short time since in the *Journal des Débats* of M. de Tocqueville's recent work, exclaims: "Here is a book as new as it is full of ideas upon a subject so incessantly handled in our day, — upon the French Revolution!" — and the praise, if very great, is by no means beyond the author's merit. The book is as novel in its conception, as it is teeming with information in its contents. The secret of this lies probably in the circumstance of M. de Tocqueville's not having separated the so-called Revolution from what preceded it, of his having treated it as a consequence of all that had gone before, of his having deemed it what it really was, — a revolution, crowning and completing twenty others that had been taking place unnoticed and unappreciated, and not the Revolution *par excellence* without a parallel, that burst upon the French nation like a thunder-storm in a bright, clear sky, and that swept hurricane-like over the land, up-wrenching what was firm-rooted, down-hurling what raised its pinnacles on high. The French Revolution was no more this than any other revolution has ever been, or can be; a revolution being in reality nothing more than the visible breaking up of what has long been giving way. The image that to our mind conveys the most exact notion of what occurs in the great and radical revolutions of a nation, is that of a stone-built edifice, whence, by some occult process, all the cement that held the walls together should be gradually abstracted. Outwardly and apparently the edifice would continue to stand, whilst its real means of cohesion would be diminishing every day more and more, until the hour when, the cement having crumbled away almost everywhere, a hail-shower or an unexpected gale of wind should send down the walls and batter in the whole building with a crash, leaving nothing in its place save a heap of rubbish. It would be very well in this case for a casual observer to cry out at the effects of the wind or the hail; but the really attentive architect, if he came to study narrowly the whole affair, would soon see that hail and wind were both comparatively innocent of the crash, and would, on minute examination of the remains of the stately pile, shake his head and say, "*But there was nothing to keep it together!*" That

minute examiner of ruins is M. de Tocqueville in his volume on the *Revolution* and the *Ancient Régime* (for he does not separate the two); and not only does he prove to us that there was no cohesiveness between the various parts of the political and social edifice in France before 1789, but he shows us *how* the cement had been gradually dropping out and crumbling away.

It is seldom that a political writer is placed in such a condition of absolute impartiality as M. de Tocqueville. Occupying by birth and family connections a high position in the aristocracy of France, he had enlisted all his sympathies in the ultra-Liberal and even in the Democratic cause. The consequence has been a moderation, an unswerving candor and truthfulness, that render his books invaluable to the public in general, and raise up enemies for them in every man who is devoted to the mere interests of a party. More than ever this result is to be observed upon the occasion of his present work; for its subject brings him into direct collision with the two great divisions of his countrymen, each of whom accuse him of having been too lenient towards the other. The partisans of the Revolution (who comprise all the moderate and extreme Republicans, and a vast portion of the monarchical Liberals and men of 1830) are shocked at M. de Tocqueville's perception of all the mistakes of 1789 and the stupid crimes of 1793, and at the way in which he proves how marvellously little the so-called "Revolution" originated; whilst the *Réactionnaires*, as they are termed (among whom may be classed the representatives of the noblesse, and the numerous body of country gentlemen), are scandalized at the frank admission he makes of all their forefathers' follies and short-comings, and of the undeniable fact that the blindness, arrogance, and deliberate uselessness of the French nobles prepared, brought about, and rendered inevitable the tragic events of the close of the last century. The first class lay down his book, saying, "No man ever belies his origin,— M. de Tocqueville, in spite of all his pretended liberalism, is after all born an aristocrat"; and the second close it angrily, with the remark, that "no man ever quite rubs out the traces left by bad companionships and bad opinions," and that, "do what he will, M. de Tocqueville,

though a *gentilhomme* by birth, will never cease being a *demagogue* at heart."

We understand this dissatisfaction, on both sides; for the book in question is in reality a stern register of the faults, failings, and unfounded pretensions of both. To the French aristocracy M. de Tocqueville says: "You declare that the Revolution robbed you of all influence and power, — such is not the case: you had neither power nor influence long before"; — and then, turning to the fanatics of 1789, he thus addresses them: "You pretend that the existing social order is your invention, that the blessings (if blessings they be) of centralization and governmental unity are your work! This is not so: you found them all made to your hand; you *invented nothing*, but took advantage of what had gone before."

Now here is the main originality of the book, — that which distinguishes it from all previous histories, and gives it its peculiar interest and novelty, — that it naturally reduces to their real matter-of-fact value all the declamations we have been accustomed to respecting "the *conquests* of 1789," and shows the "great Revolution" in its true light, as the downfall of what had been tottering for more than a hundred years, and the bungled and botched construction of a new edifice with *nearly all the materials* of the old one; an event rendered inevitable far more by those who cursed than by those who welcomed it, and whereof the rulers and beneficiaries were forcedly the plagiarists of their victims. Few things are more lucid, or more admirable, than the picture given by M. de Tocqueville of the administrative organization of France before the outbreak of 1789, — of the way in which society was constituted, and in which the wheels and springs of the governmental system really worked. This is so utterly new to the professed students of French modern history *in France*, that, till the publication of M. de Tocqueville's work, it was a thing of every-day occurrence to hear well-informed men — men whose career is a political or administrative one — say: "What a pity that one knows nothing of how government really *bore upon the nation* before the Revolution!" or, "It is extremely to be regretted that we have no notion how the minute details of administration were carried on before '89."

The greater part of all, the want of which has been so justly lamented, is furnished by M. de Tocqueville's work, in which we see how France was administered before 1789, and how the governing power suffered to escape from its essentially central source those minor currents which were to fertilize the administrative soil of the provinces. Already everything is absorbed by the capital. All is concentrated in Paris, and no movement is communicated but from thence. Every province had its Intendant, as later every department had its Prefect, and the *sous-préfets* of the present day existed then in the person of the sub-delegates that governed the lesser circumscriptions, and duly and actively "reported" thereupon to the Intendant, who in turn transmitted volumes of paper to the minister and to the *Conseil du Roi*, which already, more than half a century before the Revolution of 1789, took upon itself those minute duties of central government that are falsely represented as among the most precious "conquests" of 1789.

"No town," says M. de Tocqueville, "could establish an *Octroi*, raise a contribution, mortgage or sell lands, farm them, bring an action at law, or dispose of its city funds unless the *King's Council* had examined and approved the report sent up by the Intendant. All municipal works were adjudged to this person or that in presence of the Intendant, or the *Sous-délégué*, and were for the most part executed by the State Architect or Engineer; and there may be in this a good deal that will surprise the persons who believe that all is new in the France of modern days."

Of a truth, the exclusive disciple of 1789, so proud to know that if a *Garde Champêtre* in the neighborhood of Perpignan, or an *Adjoint du Maire* in the Finistère, commits the slightest delinquencies, the "central authority in Paris will at once know of it and pursue the delinquent,"—the Frenchman who vaunts this to you as one of the best effects of centralization and one of the most indisputable "conquests" of 1789, will, if he permit himself to be instructed by M. de Tocqueville's remarkable volume, see good reason to modify many errors of opinion and judgment ascribable to his ignorance only.

There is scarcely a subject connected with the period pre-

ceding the overthrow of the French monarchy upon which M. de Tocqueville does not afford us some detail as evidently authentic as it is curious and generally unknown. Even into the chaos of rural administration and parochial organization in France, into what has been hitherto held as the impenetrable obscurity of the municipal and communal governments of villages and small towns, he has penetrated, and we owe to his conscientious and laborious researches a more distinct idea than we ever had, how local authority, representing the central power, acted upon the interests, the character, and the passions of the rural populations in France. We see what were the relationships between the upper and lower ranks; what was the juxtaposition of the noble and the government agent; how the clergy were still in favor of freedom, whilst the people panted only for equality; how the power of royalty vexed the high-born gentleman even more than the *bourgeois*; how the *bourgeois* came to shut himself up in his democratic pride; how every fraction of society disclaimed all solidarity with others; how men of letters, who had no practical experience of anything, speculated upon everything, and in all ranks inflamed the passions of readers as unpractical as themselves; how the reality of social differences decreased, while social distinctions augmented; how court, noblesse, *bourgeoisie*, parliamentarists, soldiers, *employés*, municipal dignitaries, peasants, and priests all tended to isolate themselves, each in the interests of his own order, and not to unite together in the interests of the state. All this we see clearly reproduced in M. de Tocqueville's book, and we lay it down feeling that less than the labor of twenty years could not have engendered it, and that for twenty years' labor its four hundred pages are an adequate result.

It is doubly interesting, after a close study of the political organization of France during the whole of the last century, to remount the stream of years and see what she was a century earlier. No one better helps us to attain this end than M. Cousin, in the several volumes he has lately given to the public. Apparently the recent labors of his pen are biographical; but in reality they are far more historical. Whilst ordinary historians narrate events, here and there only sketching

some more than usually prominent personage, he, on the contrary, in the faithful delineation of individual character, seeks for what has been the influence of persons upon events.

"These studies," says M. Cousin himself, in his Preface to the *Life of Madame de Chevreuse*, "are, under somewhat romantic appearances, strictly historical studies, for which, in default of other merits, we claim that of the most scrupulous exactness; nay, they are even in some degree the fruits of a new method of historical writing, the plan whereof is on one hand to abandon entirely all conjectures, all hypotheses, all cosmopolitan or general views, and to substitute for them the simple and naked recital of facts, authenticated by dint of untiring research, and on the other hand to track out the *causes* of events, — not such as have too often been admitted, the foreign, abstract, and as it were outlying causes, — but such as have wrought in the hearts of men, on their ideas, their feelings, their virtues, and their defects, — the *living* causes, namely, of events. We would desire in History to follow up the study of humanity, which is after all the study supreme, — the eternal basis of all true Philosophy."

In these words lies the ablest description of the services rendered by M. Cousin to a certain period of French history. With what precedes the death of Henry IV., or follows the death of Mazarin, he does not much occupy himself, and even within those limits he is more especially attracted by the events which occurred between the murder of Concini, in 1619, and the coming of age of Louis XIV., in 1656; and in the first half of the seventeenth century he finds morally, socially, intellectually, and politically a greatness, which makes him over and over repeat that this is the last ascendant period in the history of France, and that after this period — after the majority of Louis XIV. and Mazarin's death — France gives unmistakable signs of decline. There is, we think, no inconsiderable truth in this view; but that is not at this moment for us the subject under discussion. What we are quite certain of, and what is likely to interest our readers, is that in M. Cousin's historical biographies of the seventeenth century is to be found the most accurate narrative of events of vast importance, conveyed in a form incomparably interesting, and in language worthy of Bossuet or Pascal. In a purely literary point of view, and as to style, the French tongue has nothing superior

to M. Cousin's late productions, and the illustrious translator of Plato, and with him his contemporary and friend, M. Villemain, take their places among the world-famous masters of French prose.

As with M. de Tocqueville, so with M. Cousin, the main-spring of his recent works lies chiefly in the actual political condition of France; and probably, were the Orleans dynasty still ruling in that country, and were M. Cousin still a member of the House of Peers, a Minister of Public Instruction, a Grand-Master of the University, or were he (*could* he again be) merely a parliamentary orator, we should not have had his eloquent justification of Madame de Longueville, his curious revelations upon Madame de Chevreuse, or his lofty panegyric of Marie de Hautefort.

Although the celebrated writer of these in France so celebrated works does not write them in order to find a framework wherein to adjust his criticisms upon the present *régime*, and attack what is, under cover of the praise due to what is no more, still it is quite evident that he is mainly induced to write them by a strong and ardent desire to flee from the pressure painfully exercised upon him by the tendencies of his own age in his own land. In thus frequenting a society more generous, more chivalrous, and, above all, more honest, you plainly perceive that he seeks to escape from the sordidness, the meanness, and the impurity of the contemporary society of France; and the manifest direction of his sympathies towards whatever is magnanimous gives you a kind of satisfaction in your admiration of the author, and inspires you with involuntary respect for the man.

M. Cousin unites in his genius the two apparently incompatible qualities which, combined, help to constitute the great charm of his writings. He is both impassioned and impartial. When he has found in a character (like that of Madame de Hautefort, for instance) sufficient beauty and truth to warrant his enthusiasm, he sets no boundaries to his enthusiasm, and carries his reader away with him as might the most ardent romancer or poet; but this does not prevent him from doing the amplest possible justice to what may occasion, or even constitute, the misfortunes of his heroine or hero. We will

take as an example Madame de Longueville and Madame de Chevreuse. M. Cousin was accused, by some of the more superficial of his countrymen, of absolutely blind idolatry for Anne de Bourbon, Duchesse de Longueville. It was positively reported that, for her sake, he detested the now living descendants of La Rochefoucauld. Yet where has her determined enemy, Madame de Chevreuse, found a more determined apologist than in M. Cousin? No! wherever M. Cousin fixes his intellectual gaze, he seeks before all, beyond all, for truth. This is a merit which his opponents, if they be conscientious, cannot refuse him. Rumor — what is lightly styled “public opinion” — had set down Madame de Longueville as an *intrigante*, who, to satisfy her own vanity, and in some degree her brother’s ambition, dragged her lover, La Rochefoucauld, into all the complications and treacheries of the *Fronde*. By dint of lynx-eyed and incessant research, it turns out (and M. Cousin establishes the fact beyond discussion, by documents in hand) that Madame de Longueville was an indolent, tender-hearted woman, wholly mastered by La Rochefoucauld, to serve whom, and for nothing else, she rushed into all the troubles of that troublous time, and to expiate her love for whom she did deep and sincere penance for twenty-five years. La Rochefoucauld was the *intrigant*, she was his obedient tool; and all the faults that have been laid to her charge are easily to be condensed into the one only sin of an ill-placed, illicit, and apparently irresistible affection. But Madame de Longueville, as we have said, had no more bitter enemy than Madame de Chevreuse, and no one would have thought it unnatural had M. Cousin treated her with at least the same harshness to which her other historians have been accustomed. But no! Although in some points (and those all-important ones where a woman is concerned) there is little good to be said of Madame de Chevreuse, her brilliant qualities, her lofty contempt of danger, the sincerity of her friendship for the queen, and her statesmanlike talents, strike her biographer with admiration; and, refusing to join chorus with the host of her detractors, he rescues for her memory the glory at least of having been “the only individual whom both Richelieu and Mazarin feared.” And so too, when chronicling

the disdain of self-interest, and the chivalrous opposition of the virtuous Madame de Hautefort to both these ministers, who, each in turn, appear as persecutors of a heroine for whom M. Cousin lets you perceive his passionate sympathy, he yet — impartial as ever — points out the immense services rendered to France by both Richelieu and Mazarin, and in a national sense defends the policy of both, in some of the most eloquent pages ever penned, — pages as full of sound political judgment as of elevated sentiment.*

It is difficult to speak of M. Cousin, even as an historian, without reverting to many of the questions which at the present moment so strongly agitate the two great divisions of the Church of France. Generally speaking, the great philosopher's more recent writings upon metaphysical subjects — for instance, his work entitled *Le Vrai, le Beau, et le Bien* — had almost entirely reconciled to him what are termed the Gallican Catholics, while only the extreme among the Ultramontanists, with the Bishop of Poitiers and M. Veuillot (editor of the journal *L'Univers*) at their head, committed the folly of anathematizing the avowedly Christian follower of Descartes, as though he were an atheist. But, strange to say,

* A circumstance of quite recent occurrence may be interesting, inasmuch as it exemplifies the immense intellectual influence of M. Cousin, even in foreign countries. Some thirty years ago a Professor of Logic and Metaphysics was to be named by the University of Edinburgh, and Sir William Hamilton was one of the candidates. Him Cousin did not then know, but he knew of his talents, for he had read an essay of Sir William's upon himself in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he (Cousin) was attacked and refuted. The contest was going against Sir William, which, when Cousin heard, he seized his pen and wrote a letter to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, saying that, if the Town Council did not nominate him, the school of philosophy in Scotland would be shorn of its honors, for that Sir William Hamilton was a thinker in a million. The letter had its effect, and Hamilton was nominated. A few months ago, Sir William having suddenly died, the same Professor's chair became again vacant, and great anxiety was manifested to know what candidate Cousin was disposed to support. Professor Fraser, Sir William Hamilton's friend and pupil, was opposed by a strong party in favor of Mr. Ferrier, Professor Wilson's son-in-law; but, added to Professor Fraser's great capacity (he is the author of a collection of *Philosophical Essays* of high renown in the United Kingdom), it became well known that M. Cousin had said, if he were not chosen, Sir William's principles of teaching would be lost, and he accordingly was chosen, the Lord Provost in his public speech saying, as a conclusive argument, that Professor Fraser had upon his side "the illustrious M. Cousin, the first authority in the science of mind in Europe."

the very chief of Ultramontanists in France, Montalembert, no longer goes all lengths with his own party, but all at once shows symptoms of liberalism and tolerance.

It would require more space than we can occupy here to enter into this religious dispute, (one of the gravest that have agitated France since the war of the Jesuits and Jansenists,) but it has had a few results which may as well be briefly pointed out to our readers. First in order of date comes Montalembert's book upon England; next, the remarkable Essay published by M. de Talloux in the *Correspondant*, and entitled *The Catholic Party*; after that, Montalembert's pamphlet upon Lord Palmerston and the Pope; and, but a few weeks ago, the Narrative, by M. de Corcelles, of his Embassy to Rome in 1849. All these publications have deeply taken hold of the public mind, and have been discussed with an ardor that proves France at the present day to be anything but indifferent to topics connected with religion. It is but fair, however, to say, that upon M. de Montalembert has been concentrated by far the greatest portion of public attention. His appreciation of England's present condition, and her probable future, has met with a reception on both sides the Channel which seldom attends any book of serious discussion now-a-days. So exceedingly was curiosity excited as to the opinion formed upon the Protestant state *par excellence* (inasmuch as it is the most intolerant one) by one of the most bigoted Catholics in the world, that Montalembert's work achieved a far greater (momentary) success than did the very far superior work of M. de Rémusat upon the same subject, which came out at precisely the same epoch. But the Catholics of France and of Rome were of one mind in thinking that M. de Montalembert had been infinitely too lavish of praise towards "perfidious Albion," and some there were who even said they felt inclined to ask whether Montalembert was a Catholic at all. It was to reply to this feeling on the part of his former adherents and friends, that, a few months ago, M. de Montalembert published his considerations upon the attitude of the Palmerston Cabinet with regard to the Pope and the affairs of Rome.

Upon this occasion, as upon some other recent ones, M. de

Montalembert is decidedly moderate in all he says upon the religious part of his subject. Of course he speaks all along as a Catholic, and it would be useless to expect from him certain views which he could not have and remain a Catholic still; but he is moderate in that he admits the necessity for much reform, and in what he says touching the Papal sway there is no exorbitant or furious zeal, but merely the enunciation of those sentiments and opinions, and the profession of those dogmas, which the most liberal Gallican, supposing him to be a sincere Catholic, must subscribe to. There is, in a word, no trace of pure Ultramontaniam in the pamphlet. In what regards Lord Palmerston, M. de Montalembert is less moderate; but it is to be doubted whether any one, out of England, could be found to blame his warmth of indignation; and many persons, we hope, in England will not quarrel with the language in which he clothes it. He tells the English prime-minister, more severely than any one has told him yet, that the secret springs of his political conduct are being made more and more evident every day, and that they are not such as will win for him the esteem of the honest or upright-minded in any country. He applies to him the whole pith of those lines of Percy Shelley's, whereof no politician was ever a more perfect exemplification than Lord Palmerston:—

“He was a coward to the strong,
A tyrant to the weak”;

and he unsparingly reproaches him with the readiness he has shown, according to circumstances, either to bully or to cringe.

But a very important part of Montalembert's essay is that in which he clearly shows the English nation what is really the position in which Lord Palmerston's policy has placed it; and the sense of his words is as follows: “You, the Whig Cabinet, say your vital principle is the French alliance. So be it; but if that be your vital principle, you must abandon your exaggerated Protestantism; for France is the ally of Rome, and cannot allow the Pope to be insulted. One of the two, therefore, you must give up,—either your sudden devotion to the Emperor Napoleon, or your old habits of insult towards

the Pope!" This puts the English government on the hip, and silence is its safest, if not its only way, out of the dilemma.

If Montalembert's pamphlet were generally read in England, we are of opinion that it would go farther than most things in proving to the English nation what is the *bonâ fide* inferiority of the position to which the French alliance and the policy of the Palmerston Cabinet have reduced it. However, upon this subject we Americans are perhaps just now not quite impartial witnesses, and we will therefore leave the Whig government to the "tender mercies" of the champion of Pius IX.

One thing we must be allowed to remark,—and it amply bears out the truth of what we observed in the beginning of this article,—namely, that at the present moment none of the most liberally administered countries of Europe, none of those that have the largest amount of freedom, have anything like the intellectual activity of despotically governed France. Whether this proves that the extreme of self-government is incompatible with the extreme of intellectual and literary cultivation, or simply that the utmost development of man's force is never provoked but by opposition, we leave to others to decide. Meanwhile we register the fact, and find in its various manifestations frequent matter for admiration.

-
- ART. XI.—1. *English Traits*. By R. W. EMERSON. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, & Co. 1856. 12mo. pp. 312.
2. *Impressions of England; or Sketches of English Scenery and Society*. By A. CLEVELAND COXE, Rector of Grace Church, Baltimore. New York: Dana & Co. 1856. 12mo. pp. 321.
3. *A Month in England*. By HENRY T. TUCKERMAN. [A New Edition.] New York: Redfield. 1856.

THESE books are of a description which always attracts and seldom wearies us. Yet we enjoy them less as the rec-

VOL. LXXXIII.—NO. 173. 43